

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: The Dawning Of The Light

Text: Matthew 4:12-17

INTRODUCTION: John came preaching and Jesus began to preach. There are two Greek verbs for preach. In Matthew 3:1; 4:17 both are the word *kerysso* which means "to preach, proclaim, tell, announce a message, herald." The other Greek verb is *euangelizo* which means "to bring a message, announce good news." They differ in the in that *kerysso* emphasizes the act of proclamation while *euangelizo* stresses the content of what is proclaimed. It is often expressed in translations as "preach the gospel." An example of *euangelizo* is Acts 14:15, 21 "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and **preach the gospel** to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God." "After they had **preached the gospel** to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch." There's a related word *proeuangelizomai* used in Galatians 3:8 "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel** beforehand to Abraham, *saying, ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.*" The preaching of the gospel lies at the center of the whole Bible, whether in OT promise or NT fulfillment. Another example of proclaiming the message is of the formerly demon possessed man in Mark 5:20 "And he went away and began to **proclaim** in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed."

Modern day preachers try to make the gospel relevant, instead of just heralding the message of the truth. Quoting from Isaiah it was a dark time, a dark place and the hope of the Messiah would be a light dawned. Well, it just dawned. The light is Christ.

It's a beautiful metaphor to describe the nature of Jesus and His character as light. This light/darkness contrast is basic to biblical theology, 2 Corinthians 4:6 "For God, who said, Light shall shine out of darkness, is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." Ephesians 5:8 "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light." Cf. John 1:4-5, the darkness does not comprehend the word of God. Cf. John 1:8-9, Jesus gave this statement in the treasury of the outer court of the Temple. A great candelabra was placed there and lighted for a week symbolizing the pillar of fire that led Israel in the wilderness. It had just gone out and Jesus' words must have been piercing to those who heard it.

In the OT walking in the light was often used a figure of righteousness and obedience to God. Walking in darkness was figurative for sin and unrighteousness. Proverbs 2:13 "From those who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness." Proverbs

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4:18-19 "But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day. ¹⁹ The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know over what they stumble."

Cf. John 9:4-5, John 12:35 "So Jesus said to them, For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes."

POINT 1 - THE RIGHT TIME. Vs. 12a, when John was put into prison, Jesus withdrew and began His ministry. The king and his wife, whom John had condemned because of evil and sin, he took his half brothers wife. John wasn't very popular. He was eventually beheaded. It wasn't popular then, nor now, to confront evil. Yet in the divine plan of God, the end of John's heralding message, began the King's message.

POINT 2 - THE RIGHT PLACE. Vs. 12b - 16 indicate the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. Nothing happened by happenstance. There's no accidents in the Lord's work. No odd or weird things, just the province of God. Jesus took this path because it was the plan of God to fulfill OT prophecies.

Jesus didn't withdraw because He feared Herod. John's scathing rebuke of the religious leaders and Jesus' close association with John make Jesus a target. Thus He left and went to preach elsewhere.

Galilee is where He went, a less sophisticated town than Judea. It's possible that Jesus chose this town because they were new to the gospel and not entrenched in religious tradition. Next was Nazareth, Cf. Luke 4:12-30. Capernaum was a wealthy city, it's where Matthew had his tax office. Jesus would say this to the city in Matthew 11:23-24 "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴ Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in *the* day of judgment, than for you."

The whole region Jesus went to sharing the truth of the gospel, that many of the Jews reacted as in John 7:41 "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?" But Matthew reminds his readers in our text that they were sitting in darkness and the land of the shadow of death, then a great light dawned. The reason Jesus began His earthly ministry in this region is the fact the gospel is for everyone.

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POINT 3 - THE RIGHT PROCLAMATION. When the light dawned the message the King brought was repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. To turn from sin is to repent, to change one's orientation, to seek a new way. It's the Greek word "*metanoeo*" which literally means a change of perception, a change in the way you see something. Israel would not be ready for or worthy of a King until she repented. The King had arrived, it was announced by Matthew, The King has proclaimed the message, repent, for time is near.

For us today, the message is the same. We proclaim the King's message, repent.